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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to establish perceptions of selected groups about the impact of Federal programs planning activities of State Education Agencies (SEAs). OE administrators and SEA administrators, local school district administrators, and professors of educational administration in 18 States were mailed a 31-item survey instrument. Results of the survey indicate that SEA planning is constrained by the late passage and funding of Federal programs as well as the SEA's own insufficient needs assessment, objective setting, and long-range planning. Variations existed when SEAs were subgrouped according to size, geographical region, and elected versus appointed superintendents. (Author)

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State Education Agency Planning: Impact of Federally Funded Programs

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Increasing federal activity in our state-oriented educational structure inevitably will lead to changing organizational patterns at the state level which may "dictate that most state departments will have to revise their structures, their activities, and their relationship with both Washington and local districts."[1] There is growing evidence to support this statement. Although the federal share of educational financing has leveled off for the present at about 7 percent, [2] as Hirsch notes, it is in the federal government's "power to be a catalyst and bring about adjustments."[3] For example, large sums of money are reserved for the SEAs so that they can administer federally funded programs. In fiscal year 1969, all SEAs combined spent $262,417,195 for administrative activities while carrying out their responsibilities. Of this total, $107,641,800, or 41 percent, was federally sponsored.[4] Thus, although the states receive only 7 percent of their total educational revenue from the federal government, the SEAs receive 41 percent of their operating revenues from this source.

Purpose & Methodology

An impact of this proportion, occurring in a relatively short time span, must cause some organizational repercussions within the SEAs. What has been the impact of expanded federal input on the ability of SEAs to plan for education in the states? One way of answering this question would be to seek the views of persons who are most closely involved with federal programs and the SEAs. The present paper summarizes findings of an 18 state survey which used this approach. The survey attempted to establish perceptions of selected groups about (1) the impact of federally funded programs on planning and planning-related activities of SEAs, and (2) the reactions of SEAs to their responsibilities related to federally funded programs. A single 31-item survey instrument was mailed to those groups which might be expected to be knowledgeable about federal-state relations in education. On the basis of this criteria, the sampled populations included Office of Education administrators, school district administrators, professors of educational administration, and SEA administrators (including federal program administrators as well as chief school officers and their direct assistants).

The U.S. Office of Education and eighteen states were included in the survey. Criteria for selection of the eighteen states included adequate representation of (1) geographical regions, (2) several SEA size groups and (3) elected and appointed SEA chief school officer states. Specifically, the sampled states can be grouped for these three purposes, as noted in Table I.

TABLE I

Typologies of the States
Included in the Survey

	SEA Personnel			Geographical Location				Superintendent	
STATES	250 or less	250-500	500+	South	East	Mid-west	West	Elected	Appointed
Alabama		345.9		X				X	
Arizona	142.1						X	X	
Colorado	203.2						X		X
Conn.		332.8			X				X
Florida			814	X				X	
Georgia			1037	X				X	
Idaho	97						X	X	
Illinois			981			X		X	
Indiana		259				X		X	
Minn.		311				X			X
Nebr.	154					X			X
N.J.			674		X				X
Ohio			624			X			X
Oregon	218						X	X	
R.I.	238				X				X
S.C.		293		X				X	
Tenn.		385		X					X
Texas			631	X					X

Thus, through sample selection, the survey included six states from each of the SEA size groupings; nine states from each of the two SEA chief school officer selection formats; and a range of three to six states from each of the geographical regions (based upon the writer's judgment).

Respondents were selected through several procedures. SEA participants included both high level administrators N = (90) and those who deal specifically with federally funded programs N = (90). SEA chief school officers in each of the eighteen states were asked to fill out a questionnaire and to request four other high level SEA administrators to do the same. The Office of Education supplied lists of persons in the eighteen SEAs who are directly responsible for administering five specific federal programs -- Title III of the National Defense Education Act of 1958, and Titles I, II, III and V of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. By isolating specific federal programs it became possible to explore perceptual variations between SEA administrators of different federal programs. Thus the survey included equal representation of SEA administrators who are directly responsible for administering federal programs and SEA administrators who are responsible for the overall direction of the SEAs' activities. Local school district adminis-

trators were identified by an Office of Education published list. Five local school district chief school officers from districts which enroll 10,000 or more students were chosen in each of the eighteen states (N = 83).* Professors of educational administration were identified through an unpublished listing of such personnel in U.S. universities. Five professors of educational administration were selected, with several exceptions, in each of the eighteen states (N = 84).** Office of Education (OE) administrators were selected through lists provided by the Office of Education (N = 10). These persons include those who have general high level responsibility in the Office of Education and those who have direct responsibility for relating to the SEAs concerning the five federal programs listed above.

Actual response to the questionnaire ranged as follows: Local School District Administrators, 43 percent, Professors of Educational Administration, 45 percent, SEA Administrators of Federal Programs, 56 percent, General SEA Administrators, 62 percent, OE Administrators, 80 percent. Overall the returned and usable response received between questionnaire mailing in early January 1971 and the cut-off date of February 12, 1971 was 53 percent.

Responses were coded, key-punched and computer-programmed at the State University of New York at Buffalo. The data were programmed according to the several respondent categories and sub-groupings noted in Table I. The report that follows is a selective representation of survey findings. Major emphasis is upon the extent to which the sampled groups agree or disagre on survey items that related to SEA planning and federal programs.

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*Not all states surveyed have five school districts with 10,000 or more students in attendance. Idaho has two, Nebraska, three, and Oregon and Rhode Island four. Thus, there were 83, rather than 90, school district administrators surveyed.

**Rhode Island was not represented on the source list of professors of educational administration. Idaho had only four on this list - thus there were 84, rather than 90, professors of educational administration surveyed.

IMPORTANCE OF FEDERAL AID FOR SEA PLANNING

Several questions were posed which attempted to establish perceptions about the SEAs' general planning effort (Table II). Interestingly, the only positive enthusiasm for SEA planning efforts comes from local school district personnel. Professors and OE Administrators are far less convinced that the SEAs do a good job of planning for educational needs in the states. Most important, the SEAs are not enthusiastic about their planning activities. Three of the four sampled groups, including SEA administrators, are dissatisfied with SEA planning, especially as this planning affects the establishment of state-wide educational objectives.

Respondents were asked to describe the level within the SEA at which most and least planning takes place. Interestingly, school district administrators, the group that was most positive about SEA planning, was least knowledgeable about where planning is carried on within SEAs. More than one-half of the school district administrators did not answer this question. The majority of the professors (71%), SEA administrators (86%), and OE administrators (100%) did respond (Table III).

Three of the four groups viewed the superintendent's office as the organizational level where the least amount of planning is carried on. Two groups viewed the divisions and two viewed the individual program as the organizational level where most planning is carried on. Because effective planning requires coordination across sub-systems, it would seem appropriate that planning should be a vital interest at the highest SEA level. Yet most respondents did not feel that this is the case in the SEAs. In fact, SEA administrators and OE administrators, who are probably in the best positions to know, think that most planning takes place at the lowest organizational level--within individual programs. It is significant that SEA administrators felt this way. One SEA administrator noted that planning should be carried on at the highest level and individual "program directors should be involved in the...overall coordination of programs..." Another SEA administrator noted that fragmented planning activities should be centralized and procedures developed so that all staff members are involved in appropriate planning activities."

Thus generally there was a less than enthusiastic response concerning overall SEA planning efforts.

The survey next probed for the impact of federally funded programs on the ability of SEAs to plan. All sampled groups agreed that federally funded programs do have a considerable impact (SEA administrators--93%, OE administrators--88%, school district administrators--97%, and professors--79%). More important, the sampled groups felt that this impact is positive (SEA personnel--83%, OE personnel--63%, school district personnel--81%, and professors--66% agreed that the federal impact is positive).

The respondents felt that the SEAs do use the resources provided through federally funded programs to further SEA planning activities. As shown by the data in Table IV, all groups responded affirmatively to this item and the item about SEA use of federal programs to further state-level educational objectives.

In summary, most sampled groups did not feel that the SEA is doing an adequate job of planning for education. At the same time, all groups viewed federally funded programs as supportive of SEA planning. Therefore, it is important to explore perceptions about intricate intergovernmental and intra-organizational SEA relationships which have resulted from federal involvement in the process of educational decision making.

TABLE II

SEA Planning Efforts*

ITEM	SEA Administrators N=102			OE Administrators N=8			School Dist. Administrators N=36			Profs. of Ed'l. Administrators N=38		
	A	D	NR	A	D	NR	A	D	NR	A	D	NR
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Comprehensive Planning is carried on by SEA	54	46	0	13	88	0	70	28	3	32	68	0
The SEA has done a good job of assessing educational needs in the state	64	36	0	38	63	0	69	28	3	50	50	0
The SEA has set clear priorities concerning educational objectives to be pursued	45	55	0	25	75	0	67	34	0	29	71	0

*Percentages may not always equal 100 percent due to rounding. A=Agree, D=Disagree, NR=No Response.

TABLE III

Where Planning Activity is Carried on in the SEAs*

GROUPS	Superintendent's Office Most/Least	Division Level Most/Least	Bureau Level Most/Least	Individual Program Level Most/Least
SEA Administrators N-102	X			X
OE Administrators N=8	X			X
School Districts Administrators N-36	X	X		
Profs. of Ed'l. Administration N=38		X		X

*Division was defined as higher in the organizational level than Bureau for purposes of the survey. "No responses" are not included. These ranged from a high of 67% "no responses for School District personnel to a low of 13% "no responses" for Office of Educational personnel.

TABLE IV

SEA Use of Federal Funds to Further Planning and Objective Setting*

ITEM	SEA Administrators N=102			OE Administrators N=8			School Dist. Administrators N=36			Profs. of Ed'l. Administration N=38		
	A	D	NR	A	D	NR	A	D	NR	A	D	NR
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
The SEA uses Administrative dollars made available through federally funded programs to further its planning activities.	86	13	2	76	25	0	89	3	8	68	27	5
The SEA uses federally funded programs to further state-level educational objectives.	83	14	3	100	0	0	75	17	6	74	18	8

*Percentages may not always equal 100 percent due to rounding. A=Agree, D=Disagree, NR=No Response.

FEDERAL PROGRAMS AND EXTERNAL CONSTRAINTS ON SEA PLANNING

In this section description will focus on the impact of federal programs and several related environmental groups (i.e., OE administrators, advisory committees, governors and state legislatures) as they facilitate and constrain SEA planning. Several sub-sections are included: Key Issues in Federal Aid Legislation; OE Personnel and Procedures; Advisory Committees; and Governors and Legislatures.

Key Issues in Federal Aid Legislation

There are several major themes which appear recurringly in Congressional hearings and in meetings where professional educators express their views about federal aid: the themes are the timing of federal programs and the resources made available by federal programs for planning purposes. Responses to items in the survey related to these themes appear in Table V.

No groups feel that fiscal resources are adequate, but responses of SEA administrators and school district administrators come closest to being favorable. Federally funded programs have made it possible for these groups to carry on activities never before possible. They seem to recognize this fact in their response. At the same time, their mixed reaction might indicate that they feel that the flurry of activity which accompanies federally funded programs is often unmanageable given the fiscal resource constraints for planning purposes. There is no such mixed reaction concerning late funding and the lack of lead time which is so often associated with federal programs. A resounding negative response was given these questions by all groups.

These are questions which are being debated in Congress and the Office of Education at this time. Responses of the sampled populations verify the need for appropriate modifications in these funding procedures. Sufficient time and planning resources must be made available if the programs devised are to meet intended purposes. As one SEA administrator noted, "State planning is really contingent upon federal action. Uncertainty at the federal level injects so many variables into the situation as to make enthusiastic planning almost impossible." A school district administrator concluded that "Advance funding of federal programs is an absolute necessity for effective planning."

It is interesting to note that SEA administrators responsible for two federally funded programs felt that there are sufficient dollars available for SEAs to plan and administer programs. Those concerned with ESEA II and ESEA III agreed (86% and 67% respectively) that there are sufficient funds. (ESEA II is a rather limited program related to school libraries while ESEA III's major purpose is to promote planning and innovative educational programs.)

Another hotly debated issue concerning federally funded programs is the form such aid should take. Federal aid can vary from the present highly specific categorical programs within education; to general aid programs within education which permit the states to make priority educational decisions; to

TABLE V

Planning Time and Planning Resources
Related to Federally Funded Programs*

	SEA Administrators N=102			OE Administrators N=8			School Dist. Administrators N=36			Profs. of Ed'l. Administration N=38		
	A	D	NR	A	D	NR	A	D	NR	A	D	NR
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
There are sufficient dollars attached to federally funded programs to enable the SEA to adequately plan for and administer these programs.	50	49	1	25	75	0	47	50	3	31	66	3
Late funding of federally funded programs causes the SEA major planning problems	88	13	0	100	0	0	91	9	0	92	8	0
Lead time for new federal programs is adequate for the SEA to help local school districts in gearing up for implementation.	7	92	1	0	100	0	17	81	3	11	91	0

*Percentages may not always equal 100 percent due to rounding. A=Agree, D=Disagree, NR=No Response.

general aid programs across functional lines which give the states the widest decision-making power--i.e., to decide which functional areas should receive these resources. One concern lies with the impact that these different formats would have upon planning. As shown in Table VI, there are interesting and important differences in the ways the groups responded to this question.

TABLE VI

Forms of Federal Aid: Impact on SEA Planning

GROUPS	Form of Federal Aid Most Facilitating Concerning SEA Planning	Form of Federal Aid Least Facilitating Concerning SEA Planning
SEA Administrators N=102	General Aid Programs in Education	Categorical Aid Programs in Education
OE Administrators N-8	Categorical Aid Programs in Education	General Aid Programs in Education
School District Administrators N=36	General Aid Programs in Education	Categorical Aid Programs in Education
Profs. of Ed'l. Administration N-38	*	Categorical Aid Programs in Education

*No clear direction was noted among Professors for this response.

The findings reported in Table VI reflect the debate which has raged between the states and Washington over the past decade. Washington based administrators feel that federal programs must be kept highly specific to assure that the states and the school districts will plan and achieve stated objectives. State and local administrators feel that their needs are unique and that planning and achievement of objectives would best be met if federal dollars were distributed without "strings attached." As one SEA administrator put it, "highly categorical federal programs, by their very nature, discourage planning at the state level since fewer options are open for consideration."

OE: Personnel and Procedures

Once passed by Congress, there is much that the OE can do to facilitate or hinder the accomplishment of the objectives related to educational legislation. Therefore, several items were included in the survey which relate to Office of Education Procedures. Table VII summarizes responses to these items.

TABLE VII

Office of Education Procedures*

ITEMS	SEA Administrators N=102			OE Administrators N=8			School Dist. Administrators N=36			Profs. of Ed'l. Administration N=38		
	A	D	NR	A	D	NR	A	D	NR	A	D	NR
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Guidelines for federally funded programs are usually helpful in planning for implementation of these programs.	89	9	1	100	0	0	72	22	6	82	13	0
Office of Education personnel are helpful in assisting the SEA to plan for federal programs.	81	18	2	100	0	0	56	28	17	71	23	5
Evaluation by the Office of Education of SEA administration of federally funded programs has helped the SEA to plan better.	63	32	6	100	0	0	64	22	13	58	32	11

*Percentages may not always equal 100 percent due to rounding. A=Agree, D=Disagree, NR=No Response.

All groups felt the OE plays an important facilitating role in SEA planning. Federal guidelines were viewed as highly useful and OE personnel were perceived as important human resources for SEA planning and evaluation of federal programs. Especially important is the fact that SEA administrators viewed OE guidelines and personnel as important positive elements in the planning process.* There seems to be a high level of acceptance within the SEAs for OE guidance. This is a possibility which might be explored to further improve SEA planning. If OE personnel are helpful to the SEAs in their planning efforts, perhaps this resource ought to be more fully exploited. It would require relatively few new federal dollars to increase and upgrade the OE manpower pool for this purpose.

SEA administrators responsible for specific federal programs responded even more strongly in the affirmative than other SEA administrators regarding OE personnel. In fact, all SEA federal program administrators viewed federal guidelines as helpful for SEA planning. On the other hand, there was less agreement by several SEA federal program administrator sub-groups concerning OE evaluation than there was among general SEA administrators. Specifically, those SEA administrators associated with ESEA II, III, and V were least positive about OE evaluation procedures (they agreed with this statement by only 43%, 44% and 50% respectively).

Advisory Committees

SEAs have been encouraged to use advisory committees in their planning and administration of federally funded programs. It is assumed that advisory committees, removed from the daily chores of administration, can help the SEAs to organize their activities. In other words, advisory committees should provide the SEAs with an "alter-ego," a checking mechanism which can help to improve SEA planning activities. Two survey items relating to advisory committees are reported in Table VIII.

Advisory committees which are used, but not required, for federal programs as opposed to those that are required were viewed as more valuable for planning purposes. This was especially true of OE and SEA administrators. One possible explanation for this response is that SEA initiated advisory committees would tend more to be a reflection of the needs of the states than would advisory committees mandated by congress or the OE.

OE regulations require an advisory committee to be established for ESEA I state programs. SEA administrators of ESEA I programs disagree strongly that these committees are valuable additions for planning purposes (67% disagree). Regarding the use of advisory committees that are not required only 17 per cent of these same SEA administrators thought they would not be valuable additions for planning. Experience with required advisory committees has left these SEA administrators with a negative view of their impact on planning. Still they feel that the advisory committee concept is appropriate, if applied on a voluntary basis.

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*There were some strong disagreements however. For example, one SEA administrator noted that guidelines "limit and in some cases change the purpose of the legislation." A professor felt that guidelines are often "some OE official's views of what the law should have been--consequently clarity is lost."

TABLE VIII

Advisory Committees and Federally Funded Programs*

ITEMS	SEA Administrators N=102 A	D	NR	OE Administrators N=8 A	D	NR	School Dist. Administrators N=36 A	D	NR	Profs. of Ed'l. Administration N=38 A	D	NR
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
SEA advisory committees required for federal programs are valuable additions for better program planning.	61	37	3	51	51	0	61	33	6	68	29	3
SEA advisory committees used (but not required) for federal programs are valuable additions for better program planning.	81	17	3	88	13	0	69	22	8	68	29	3

*Percentages may not always equal 100 percent due to rounding. A=Agree, D=Disagree, NR=No Response.

Governors and State Legislatures

Indirectly related to federal programs administration in the SEAs, is the extent to which the governors' offices and the state legislatures facilitate SEA efforts to pursue comprehensive educational planning. Responses to questions in this area indicate that the governors and state legislatures are perceived as less than facilitating of the SEAs efforts to plan for education. It seems that the states could do much to improve SEA planning potentials by addressing themselves to their own intergovernmental shortcomings. With such improved relationships SEAs would probably be in a better position to use federally funded programs for planning purposes.

SEA INITIATED PLANNING ACTIVITIES RELATED TO FEDERAL PROGRAMS

This section will focus on the ability of the SEAs, as perceived by the sampled populations, to use federally funded programs to meet the unique needs of their particular states. Several sub-sections are included: SEAs'

Initiation of Activities with Congress and OE; SEA Organization for Administration of Federal Programs; SEA Use of Environmental Groups for Planning; SEA-School District Relations and Federally Funded Programs.

SEA Initiation of Activities with Congress and the OE

There are several ways in which the SEAs can influence federally funded programs. First, they can lobby in Congress and the executive agencies to influence the scope and aims of the enabling legislation. Second, they can influence rules associated with educational legislation by helping the OE to develop regulations and guidelines. This can be done when relationships concerning new programs are being fashioned or as regulations and guidelines to existing progarms are modified to meet changing needs. If successful, this tactic assures the SEAs that "appropriate" regulations and guidelines will be developed. Third, SEAs can volunteer personnel to sit on OE review committees which evaluate school district and SEA federal program performance. Finally, the SEAs can innovate in their administration of federal programs, setting positive precedents which later may be adopted by the OE in regulation and guideline modifications. The sampled groups were asked the extent to which they thought the SEAs carry on these four activities (Table IX).

Two findings are particularly interesting. First, all sampled groups perceived the SEA as more influential in their relations with the OE than in their relations with the Congress. Second, SEA administrators are least positive of all groups about their own demonstrated ability to influence Congress and the OE concerning planning for federally funded programs. It is especially interesting to note that SEA administrators of federal programs are most in disagreement about SEAs developing innovations which are later adopted in regulations and guidelines as official policy by the OE.

In summary, the SEAs' impact in Washington is perceived as limited to the OE and there is much disagreement as to the extent of this impact. One SEA administrator felt that "SEAs, in concert, should serve as a review council to the major policy decisions of the OE." Respondents clearly felt that the SEAs could do more to seize the initiative in their relations with the federal government. One professor summed the situation up by saying the SEAs will have to "be aggressive in pre-planning and sufficiently 'pushy' with USOE to get this incorporated into their thinking."

SEA Organization for Administration of Federal Programs

Once debate is finished, a law is passed, and regulations and guidelines are developed, there are still ways in which the SEAs can modify the impact of federal programs. One critical consideration is the way in which the SEAs organize for administration of federal programs. Respondents were asked their perception of several SEA administrative processes relative to federally funded programs (Table X).

TABLE IX

Means by Which SEAs Influence Planning
for Federally Funded Programs*

ITEM	SEA Administrators N=102			OE Administrators N=8			School Dist. Administrators N=36			Profs. of Ed'l. Admin. N=38		
	A	D	NR	A	D	NR	A	D	NR	A	D	NR
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
The SEA influences planning for federally funded programs by:												
a. lobbying in Congress and in the executive offices before policy is formalized as legislation	37	59	4	75	25	0	61	31	8	40	53	8
b. helping to shape federal regulations and guidelines	55	43	2	88	13	0	70	19	11	50	43	8
c. sitting on Office of Education review committees	45	48	7	75	25	0	70	8	22	64	29	8
d. developing innovations in the administration of federally funded programs which are later adopted as official policy by the Office of Education	48	39	0	63	38	0	58	31	11	37	55	8

*Percentages may not always equal 100 percent due to rounding. A=Agree, D=Disagree, NR=No Response.

TABLE X

SEA Administrative Practices
Related to Federally Funded Programs*

ITEM	SEA Administrators N=102			OE Administrators N=8			School Dist. Administrators N=36			Profs of Ed'l. Administration N=38		
	A	D	NR	A	D	NR	A	D	NR	A	D	NR
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Usually federally funded programs are administered at a sufficiently high level within the SEA so that planning is possible across major unit lines.	60	40	0	38	63	0	46	47	6	35	60	5
The SEA does a good job of coordinating the different federally funded programs.	50	48	2	25	75	0	67	34	0	45	53	3
The SEA does a good job of coordinating federally funded programs with state funded programs.	65	33	2	38	63	0	72	25	3	42	56	3

*Percentages may not always equal 100 percent due to rounding. A=Agree, D=Disagree, NR=No Response.

The only group which felt that SEAs administer federal programs at a sufficiently high organizational level so as to permit planning across major unit lines were SEA administrators. Even within this group, which is actively engaged in organizational decisions concerning federal programs, there were many respondents who disagreed with this statement. Those SEA personnel responsible for administration of ESEA I were most positive in their response to this question (84% agreed). The magnitude of this federal program has caused many SEAs to give it high administrative status. Possibly this accounts for the positive response of SEA administrators responsible for ESEA I.

There was less SEA administrator agreement with the statement that SEAs do a good job of coordinating the different federally funded programs. Those SEA administrators who administer ESEA II and V were least in agreement with the statement (29% and 25% agreement respectively) that SEAs coordinate federal and state programs for planning purposes. Neither the professors nor the OE administrators agreed that the SEAs have done a good job of organizing and coordinating on any of the three items posed in Table X.

In defense of the SEAs, it must be remembered that the increase in federal programs during the 1960's has created enormous organizational problems for the SEAs. Many SEAs have more than doubled their personnel and operating budgets since these programs were initiated. It would be naive to assume that organizational adjustments of this magnitude would be smooth. The fact remains, however, that the SEAs are still not perceived as adequately meeting this organizational challenge.

SEA Use of Environmental Groups for Planning

There is much expertise available to help SEAs plan for federally funded programs. Not all of this expertise resides within the SEAs. There are many knowledgeable persons from the SEAs' environment who can be called upon for guidance. Some, such as school district personnel, have traditionally been used by SEAs for highly specific tasks such as curriculum development. Others, such as management consultant firms, have not been used frequently in the past. Several items were posed in the survey regarding four environmental groups which might be used by SEAs as they gear up to plan for federally funded programs (Table XI).

There was little agreement that the SEAs make adequate use of management consultant firms. Yet where they have been retained there are indications that, properly employed, these firms can do much to enhance SEA planning. Interestingly, professors agreed that SEAs do use university experts for planning purposes. There was significant disagreement between school district administrators and SEA administrators on the extent to which school district personnel are used to help SEAs plan for federal programs. SEA administrators were more certain of the "good use" of school district personnel than were the school district administrators. This perceptual gap is important and one which is well within the capacity of the SEAs to modify. As one school district administrator noted, "planning should be done more thoroughly with local school districts before goals are set...." Finally, OE and SEA personnel both felt that there is good SEA use of OE personnel to help SEAs plan for federally funded programs.

TABLE XI

SEA Use of Environmental Groups
to Formulate Plans for Federally Funded Programs*

ITEM	SEA Administrators N=102			OE Administrators N=8			School Dist. Administrators N=36			Profs. of Ed'l. Administration N-38		
	A	D	NR	A	D	NR	A	D	NR	A	D	NR
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
To help formulate plans for the administration of federal programs, the SEA makes good use of:												
a. management consultant firms	39	57	4	50	50	0	28	56	17	23	73	3
b. experts from universities	57	41	2	51	50	0	58	28	17	58	39	3
c. local school district personnel	83	17	1	63	38	0	58	31	11	69	27	5
d. Office of Education personnel	72	25	4	76	25	0	56	22	22	56	34	11

*Percentages may not always equal 100 percent due to rounding. A=Agree, D=Disagree, NR=No Response.

In summary, the SEAs are perceived as employing the more traditional sources of environmental resources--school district personnel (except for the important disagreement between SEA administrators and school administrators), OE personnel and university experts, but are not perceived as making good use of a less traditional enviromental resource--management consultant firms.

SEA--School District Relations and Federally Funded Programs

In many states the introduction of the federally funded programs of the past decade have revolutionized relationships between SEAs and school districts. Before this time many SEAs had minimum contact with the school districts. In only a few instances were SEAs responsible for the administration of categorical state educational program. State aid most often was (and still is)

packaged as general per-pupil aid. Thus, SEAs were preoccupied with regulatory activities focusing on the auditing of school district records (e.g., budgets, pupil attendance and building code specifications). The federal programs of the late 1950's and the 1960's thrust the SEAs into a new leadership and planning role, focusing on the cooperative development of categorical educational programs with school districts.

One alternative was for the SEAs to choose minimal (regulatory) involvement assuring the OE that minimum standards would be complied with by the school districts. Another alternative was for the SEAs to use federally funded programs to encourage new educational approaches (leadership) in the school districts. According to the respondents in the present survey the SEAs have chosen the latter alternative. All groups felt that the SEAs encourage the school districts to use federally supported programs to develop innovative educational concepts (SEA personnel--96%, OE personnel--88%, school district personnel--94%, and professors--79% agreed with this statement). The survey included several other items centering on such SEA initiated activities. The responses to these items are reported in Table XII.

Responses to the first two items in Table XII indicate that SEA-school district planning conferences are helpful to local school districts in planning for federal program administration but are not held as frequently as they might be. School district administrators were only slightly in agreement that there were enough such conferences, but more than three-quarters of these respondents felt that such conferences, are helpful for planning purposes. Even SEA administrators felt that there should be more such planning conferences. In short, both groups clearly desire to increase the number of SEA-school district planning conferences.

Interestingly, there was substantial agreement by SEA and school district administrators concerning the effectiveness of SEA communications with school districts. In short, school districts, are in agreement that the SEA have developed effective approaches to keep them informed about: (1) the status of their proposals for federally funded programs; (2) new federal programs; and (3) changes in federal programs.

RESPONSE VARIATIONS BASED ON SELECTED SAMPLE POPULATION SUB-GROUPINGS

The eighteen states surveyed were chosen on the basis of three criteria: selection process of the chief school officer (appointed/elected); SEA size; and SEAs by geographical regions. There are some interesting variations among the states when regrouped according to these three criteria. This section of the report will summarize these variations.

Appointed and Elected SEA Chief School Officers

Most differences in perception of the sampled populations from the two chief school officer selection formats did not constitute a consistent or sufficient trend. In most instances perceptual differences were within a 10 percent range.

TABLE XII

SEA Initiated Planning and Communications Activities
With School Districts Related to Federally Funded Programs*

ITEMS	SEA Administrators N=102			OE Administrators N=8			School Dist. Administrators N=36			Profs of Ed'l. Administration N=38		
	A	D	NR	A	D	NR	A	D	NR	A	D	NR
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
The SEA holds a sufficient number of planning conferences with local school districts concerning new and amended federal programs.	72	29	0	38	63	0	55	42	3	32	66	3
These planning conferences are helpful to local school districts in their planning for federal program administration.	94	7	0	88	0	13	77	19	3	63	29	8
The SEA maintains effective communications with local school districts concerning:												
a. feedback on the status of local school district proposals for federally funded programs	86	15	0	63	38	0	75	25	0	51	45	5
b. new federal programs	81	19	0	75	25	0	69	31	0	50	45	5
c. changes in legislation, guidelines and regulations concerning federally funded programs	85	16	0	63	38	0	72	31	0	58	40	3

*Percentages may not always equal 100 percent due to rounding. A=Agree, D=Disagree, NR=No Response.

There were, however, several items which elicited divergent responses, indicating some important variations in perceptions based upon whether chief school officers are appointed or elected. For example, the state legislature was viewed less negatively as it facilitates comprehensive SEA planning in states in which the chief school officer is elected than in states where the chief school officer is appointed. In states where the SEA chief school officer is elected, 15 percent of the professors, 56 percent of the school district administrators, and 48 percent of the SEA administrators felt that the state legislature plays a facilitating role in SEA planning. In the states where the SEA chief school officer is appointed, 11 percent of the professors, 40 percent of the school district administrators and 30 percent of the SEA administrators agreed with this statement. Possibly where he is elected, the chief school officer is viewed by the state legislature as more responsive to the electorate and the legislature.

Several survey items found the sampled populations more positive about planning activities carried on in SEAs led by elected chief school officers than in SEAs led by appointed chief school officers. Generally, respondent groups from states with elected chief school officers were more positive concerning SEA comprehensive planning, assessment of educational needs, setting of priorities in education objectives and coordination of federal programs than were respondents from states with appointed SEA chief school officers. Moreover, SEA administrators, the group closest to such planning and coordination efforts, were most at variance in their responses to these items. SEA administrators from states with elected chief school officers were consistently more positive about the planning and coordination activities of their SEAs than were SEA administrators from states with appointed chief school officers. The only sampled group which tended to feel that SEA planning is more successful in the states in which the SEA chief school officer is appointed were professors of educational administration. Even within this respondent group there was not extensive differentiation concerning the two SEA Chief School officer selection types.

A large perceptual variation exists concerning use of several environmental groups to help the SEAs plan between school district administrators and SEA administrators in the states where the chief school officer is appointed. Sixty-nine percent of the school district administrators and 81 percent of the SEA administrators in the elected chief school officer states felt that their SEA makes good use of school district personnel to help formulate plans for administration of federal programs.

In states where the chief school officer is appointed, 50 percent of the school district administrators and 84 percent of the SEA administrators agreed with this statement. Thus there was a 12 percent variation among the groups in the states where the chief school officer is elected while there was a 34 percent variation between them in the states where the SEA chief school officer is appointed. A similar response was elicited concerning the use of OE personnel to help formulate plans for administration of federal programs. In this case the variation was 3 percent between school district administrators and SEA administrators in states where the chief school officer is elected and 30 percent between school district administrators and SEA administrators in states where the chief school officer is appointed.

In summary, in several instances there was less positive perception concerning the SEA planning process in states where the chief school officer is appointed than in states where the chief school officer is elected. In addition, there were several perceptual gaps between school district administrators and SEA administrators in states where the chief school officer is appointed. However, it should be remembered that for most items in the survey, there was little variation in perception between the two chief school officer selection formats. Thus, it would be inappropriate to make sweeping conclusions from the few items which did indicate differences.* At the same time, these responses might indicate that the question of the effect of chief school officer selection procedure on SEA planning should be pursued in future studies.

Size of the SEAs

Respondent groups were regrouped on the basis of SEA size. There were six states in each of the categories depicted. Because the sampled populations have been regrouped into three categories, the small number of respondents, in several instances, makes it difficult to make reliable comparisons. The professor and local school administrator respondent groups were especially small. Therefore, the summary which follows should be viewed as tentative. Only the SEA administrators in each size groups are sufficient in numbers for reliable comparison.

SEAs With Less Than 250 Personnel. School district administrators in states with less than 250 SEA personnel were most positive about the effectiveness of SEA communications with the school districts concerning the status of federal program proposals (82% of this group agreed with the statement as compared to 78% of school district administrators in states with 250-500 SEA personnel and 69% of school district administrators in states with 500 or more SEA personnel). Though not a large variation, it is interesting to note that the smaller SEAs, with fewer personnel available, are perceived as most effective in their communications with school districts while the largest SEAs, with most personnel available, are viewed as least effective.

There was a similar small-large SEA relationship concerning advisory committees. One possible explanation for this trend is that as SEAs grow larger, they may have more expertise available within and feel less need for outside advisory groups.

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*There were some directed comments by respondents which contrast with the overall positive perceptions of planning in SEAs with elected chief school officers. For example, one professor felt that his state "needs an SEA without a political, elected head." Another felt that the elected superintendent was "using federal funds to publicize himself under the guise of administration of the funds."

SEAs with 250-500 Personnel. The middle-sized SEAs, according to SEA administrator responses, do the best job of coordinating planning activities. For example, administrators in SEAs with 250-500 personnel are most positive that their SEAs plan for federal programs at levels within the organization which are sufficiently high so as to permit planning across major unit lines (77% of this group agreed as compared to 56% in states with less than 250 SEA personnel and 46% in states with more than 500 SEA personnel).

School district personnel in these states were most aware of the locus of planning activity in their SEAs (78% knew in these states as compared to 55% in states with less than 250 SEA personnel and 31% in states with more than 500 SEA personnel). This response, linked with the response of the SEA administrators concerning the level of administration of federal programs, might indicate that the 250-500 personnel SEAs are in a better position to plan than are the smaller and larger SEAs. They are large enough to assure availability of expertise, yet small enough to be manageably dealt with by district administrators and others.

SEAs with More than 500 Personnel. Other survey responses indicate that the large SEAs have several planning advantages. For example, professors in the 500 or more SEA personnel states were most positive about SEA use of federal program dollars to further planning activities (82% in this group as compared to 69% in states with 250-500 SEA personnel and 55% in states with less than 250 SEA personnel). Similarly, SEA personnel in the largest SEAs were most positive about their assessment of educational needs (71% in this group as compared to 65% in states with 250-500 SEA personnel and 57% in states with less than 250 SEA personnel felt their SEAs assessed educational needs).

In summary, there were several survey items which indicate that less than 250 personnel SEAs are perceived as most communicative, 250-500 personnel SEAs are perceived as most aware of their planning processes and 500 or more personnel SEAs are perceived as most able to carry out complex planning activities. However, because of the limited size of the sub-grouped sample populations, it would be erroneous to make more than tentative statements concerning SEA size as it affects SEA planning.

SEAs by Geographical Region

Respondents were regrouped on the basis of geographical representation. There were four Western states, five Midwestern states, six Southern states, and three Eastern states (writer's judgment). Because the sampled populations were regrouped into four categories there was a major problem for analysis. In both the professor and school district administrator groups, the numbers were too small for meaningful analysis. Therefore, the discussion will focus entirely upon SEA administrators, the one category which appears large enough in number of respondents to permit reliable comparisons.

Several regional variations emerged in the analysis. Consistently SEA administrators from Eastern states tended to be least positive about the impact of federally funded programs on SEA planning activities. For example, only 65 percent of the Eastern SEA administrators thought the federal impact on SEA planning is positive, compared to the next lowest regional SEA administrator group's 91 percent. Only 35 percent of the Eastern SEA administrators felt that evaluation by OE personnel helps SEAs plan better, compared to the next lowest regional SEA administrator group's 60 percent.

The Eastern SEA administrators also ranked their own planning efforts the lowest. For example, they consistently ranked their SEAs about 20 percent below the next lowest regional SEA administrators concerning SEA use of environmental groups to help the SEAs plan for the administration of federal programs. They ranked their SEAs similarly low concerning SEA use of federally funded programs to further state-level educational objectives. Finally, they ranked their SEAs a full 30 percentage points lower than the next lowest regional SEA administrators concerning the setting of clear educational priority objectives.

A second pattern that emerged is the relatively high ranks which SEA administrators from the Western and Southern regions gave their SEAs concerning planning, coordination of federal programs and use of environmental experts. The Western (71% agree) and Southern (60% agree) state administrators rank themselves better as comprehensive planners than do Midwest (36% agree) and Eastern state (35% agree) SEA administrators. Similarly, Western and Southern region SEA administrators believed that they do a good job of coordinating federal programs more than did SEA administrators from the Midwest and Eastern regions (West-54%, South-69%, Midwest-32%, and East-29% responded positively). The same pattern emerged concerning the use of management consultants to develop plans for federal programs (West-50%, South -46%, Midwest-27%, East-24% SEA administrators agreed that their SEAs made good use of these groups).

A third pattern which emerged is the variations in perceptions of SEA administrators from the Southern regions and the other three regions concerning SEA planning and the governors and state legislatures. SEA administrators from the other regions were far less in agreement than were SEA administrators from the Southern region concerning the facilitating role of the governor and state legislature:

Item - Governor as facilitating of planning in SEA (West-21%, Midwest [illegible]%, South-54% and East-35% SEA administrator agreement)

Item - State Legislature as facilitating of planning in the SEA (West-25%, Midwest-46%, South-60% and East-12% SEA administrator agreement)

It is reasonable to conclude that relationships between SEAs on the one hand and governors and state legislatures on the other hand may vary by geographical regions.

Finally, SEA administrators from the West and Midwest regions felt more positive concerning the use of advisory committees for federal programs than did SEA administrators from the South and East. Sixty-eight percent and 86 percent of the SEA administrators from the West and Midwest regions respectively, felt that required advisory committees are valuable additions to better program planning, as compared to 46 percent of the SEA administrators from the Southern region and 47 percent of the SEA administrators from the Eastern region. A similar regional variation emerged for advisory committees which are not required. (West-89%, Midwest-91%, South-74%, and East 65% of SEA administrators agreed with this statement.)

In summary, there are several survey item variations based upon geographical regions. Eastern SEA administrators tended to be least optimistic about OE and SEA planning activities. Western and Southern SEA administrators tended to be most positive especially about their own planning activities. Southern SEA administrators are most positive about the governor and state legislature as facilitating SEA planning. West and Midwest SEA administrators appear to be more accepting of outside advisement groups than are SEA administrators from the South and East. It should be remembered, however, that the other three respondent groups included in the overall survey could not be used to check the SEA administrator responses because of limitations in sample sizes when they were sub-grouped by regions.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The challenge to the educational community created by the federally funded educational programs of the last decade has been great. Federally funded programs constitute a small fraction of the resource inputs for education, but, because of their highly categorical nature, they have effected major reallignments within educational governing structures. SEAs in particular have had to make organizational adjustments. As noted earlier federal programs constitute approximately eight percent of resource inputs for states, but federal funds provide support for over 50 percent of the personnel in many SEAs. As might be expected, this added major educational resource base has caused disruptions in the planning activities of the SEAs.

The findings of the study, however, indicate that modifications in Washington and in the SEAs could promote better planning for federally funded programs. Students of inter-governmental educational relations have advocated many of these modifications for some time. The findings of the study provide support for these modifications; i.e., responses of relevant groups indicate that the modifications suggested below could greatly improve the planning activities of SEAs.

The Congress and the OE

The recent interest shown by Congress in the need for long-range educational planning (e.g., experimenting with program approval for more than a single year and exploring the concept of "forward funding") is one important beginning point. It is too early to gauge the effects of these Congressional modifications, but responses to the present study indicate that these practices

should enhance better planning practices at all levels of educational governance. Sufficient lead time to permit adequate pre-planning should also be built into new federally funded programs. Such lead time is vital if the OE, the SEAs and the school districts are to be expected to develop appropriate administrative approaches to new federally funded programs.

A further useful modification might be for Congress to experiment with general aid programs. All respondent groups, except for OE administrators, felt that general aid to education would assure that resources would be focused on the unique needs of each state. SEAs and school districts could apply these federal resources to educational objectives set at the state level. The counter-argument is strong: the SEAs must first assess educational needs and make the difficult decisions as to which education objectives should receive the highest priorities before general aid programs are legislated. There is not much evidence to indicate that the SEAs sufficiently assess educational needs and set education objectives.

OE practices presently viewed as supportive of SEA planning, should be extended. For example, the OE might assign more personnel to make on-site visits to the SEAs to help them develop plans for the administration of federal programs. Federal guidelines which are presently perceived as helpful for planning purposes could be further improved. Broadening the involvement of SEA personnel and school district administrators in the development of guidelines could make them even more effective. Wider SEA and school district involvement would mean that: (1) necessary modifications probably would be incorporated at the earliest possible time; and (2) the SEAs and school districts would better comprehend and accept the intent of guidelines.

Finally, advisory committees for federal programs might make more sense if the concept comes from the SEAs rather than from Congress or the OE. The planning abilities and needs of the states vary. Therefore the use of advisory committees and the forms they take might better be left to the states. Practically, whether one accepts this position or not, it is clear that the SEAs can choose to react minimally to mandated advisory committees. There was little respondent support for mandated advisory groups.

The SEAs

Not all problems related to federal aid to education lie in Washington. There is much that the SEAs can do to improve their planning performance, even given the present federally-based constraints. One immediate activity that the SEAs might pursue, as noted above, would be to assess educational needs in their states and set priority educational objectives based upon these needs assessments. It is unlikely that the SEAs will improve their planning for federally funded programs (or, for that matter, state programs) until they accept this responsibility. Another important SEA activity would be to improve relationships with the governors and the state legislatures. The governors and state legislatures are in a position to set boundaries on SEA administrative practices. (Respondents viewed the governors and state legislatures as constraints on SEA planning for federally funded programs.) It would appear incumbent for SEA leaders to work towards improvement of

relationships with the governors and state legislatures. At the very least, they could keep governors and legislators up-to-date regarding SEA planning activities and needs. Further, they could actively seek out the governors and legislators to make potential supporters out of these state officers who are most often highly critical of SEAs.

The SEAs could also improve their relations with the federal government. Certainly they could increase their communications with Congressmen, relating SEA views about proposed new legislation and amendments to on-going legislation before they are passed by Congress. In addition, by volunteering to serve on OE regulation, guideline and program review committees the SEAs can help shape federal policies after a program is legislated. Results of the study indicate that SEAs could become involved in these activities more frequently.

SEAs employ traditional environmental groups to help with their planning needs, but they do not seem to make much use of management consultant firms for this purpose. In the instances where these firms have been retained, there is some evidence that they are highly useful to SEAs. These are organizations which specialize in the complex process of planning. SEAs should consider retaining them to improve planning activities.

Overall planning directions cannot be set unless planning is pursued at the highest organizational levels in the SEAs. Responses to the survey indicate that high level planning in SEAs today is rare. Until there is commitment by the leaders of the SEAs to planning concepts and decisions are made to assure that planning activities are coordinated and monitored at this level, it cannot be expected that individual programs will be effective. Planning must be pursued across the SEA if there are to be coherent, rational and meaningful results.

Finally, if the proposed modifications in Washington and at the state level are to have any impact, the "message" must be transmitted to the school districts. Therefore, it is important to extend the ties now developing between the SEAs and the school districts. For example, planning conferences between the SEAs and the school districts were viewed favorably by the respondents, but there was a feeling that there were not enough of these planning conferences. The SEAs seem to have found relevant means of relating to the school districts. What may now be required is that more SEA resources be harnessed to extend these activities.

Federally funded programs present a vehicle which challenges the SEAs to improve their overall planning performance. In some ways they have met the challenge, developing planning procedures which enhance the potential for accomplishment of educational objectives. In other ways they have not adequately responded to the challenge. The SEAs have learned much in the process. What is now required is the commitment and will to change.

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